

National Self-Injury Awareness Day Committee

Approximately 1% of the United States population uses physical self-injury as a way of dealing with stress. Despite the fact that self-injury is far from being rare, myths and misunderstanding surround this psychological ailment -- mistaken ideas that often result in self-harmers being treated badly by police, doctors, therapists, and emergency room personnel.

As this problem receives more and more media attention, a group of us realized that something needs to be done to dispel the myths and help professionals deal more effectively with self-harming patients. To address the need for education and information about self-injury, we organized a grassroots effort to declare March 1, 2000, National Self-Injury Awareness Day. On that date, people across the country are going to distribute brochures and information sheets, targeting hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric wards, school guidance counselors, university resident assistants and counseling services, therapists, and crisis lines. Some of our committee members have made plans to give talks on that date, and we are preparing a press kit we will send to major media outlets in cities where we have participants. Dozens of people from all over the world have signed up to participate in this educational effort.

I have enclosed a copy of our fact sheet. When you have read it, you will understand why I am requesting that you issue a proclamation and declare March 1, 2000, as Self-Injury Awareness Day in your city. If you or your staff have further questions, please call

Thank you.

Sincerely,

NSIAD Committee